

Imagine if every single person in Indianapolis and Marion County smoked. For extra measure, you could even add in a few folks from the suburbs. That number still would not equal the total number of adult smokers in Indiana.

Currently, 1.2 million adults in Indiana are regular smokers. This is tragic for everyone, because whether you smoke or not, you are paying for the health care costs as part of this man-made epidemic.

Recently we learned that if R.J. Reynolds tobacco company had its way, the number of Hoosier women smoking will skyrocket. The tobacco company launched an aggressive marketing campaign designed to position “Camel No. 9” cigarettes as a woman’s “latest fashion accessory”.

The tobacco company is holding elaborate parties to launch the cigarette in bars and clubs around the country, including Indianapolis. They also have an advertising campaign running in women’s magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Glamour*, and *Vogue*. The ads refer to the product as “light and luscious”.

What’s even worse, these cigarettes are already on the shelves in Indiana. Once again, Indianapolis is a guinea pig for the tobacco industry.

This latest tobacco product hits store shelves just as Indiana’s General Assembly considers what to do about the future of Hoosiers’

health. The Healthy Indiana Plan uses an increased cigarette tax to fund health programs to help smokers quit, help for the uninsured and additional immunizations for children.

All of these components work together to produce an effect that is larger than the impact of any single part of the plan. That is the beauty of this plan.

We cannot improve the health of Hoosiers unless we address our high smoking rate, now the second highest in the country. Let's just focus on women as an example.

What Indiana needs is a one-two punch to protect women. We need to raise the cigarette tax and fund our tobacco control program at a high enough level to make a difference in the health and lives of women and girls.

In 2004, more than 15,000 babies were born to Hoosier mothers that smoke. The cost for smoking affected births was \$28 million. Fifty-one percent of all babies born to Indiana mothers are on Medicaid.

If Indiana raised the cigarette tax by \$1.00, there would be 16,000 fewer smoking-affected births to Hoosier moms over the next five years. The full impact of a higher cigarette tax can only be maximized and sustained when it is combined with enough funding to

help women quit and aggressive programs to prevent young girls from starting to smoke. That is true prevention at work!

Currently, Indiana spends only \$1 for every \$44 that the tobacco industry spends to addict our young women and teenage girls.

Women in Indiana are fed up with seeing their babies and young women preyed upon by the tobacco industry. We want this to end.

This latest tobacco product hits store shelves just as the Governor has signed into law a 79 percent increase in Indiana's cigarette tax. The Indiana Checkup Plan will use an increase in the cigarette tax to allow for more smoking cessation programs, as well as help for people who uninsured and babies who need proper immunizations.

But, until cigarettes are more expensive and adequate monies are devoted to stopping the number one cause of preventable disease and death, our young women will continue to be lured by the marketing promises that sell cigarettes and promote death.

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